

DATE: February 14, 2023
TO: Co-Chairs Rahman and Kavros DeGraw, Vice Chairs Needleman and Chaffee,
Ranking Members Fazio and Zullo, and Members of the Planning and
Development Committee
FROM: Sandy Fry, 91 Newport Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06107
Chair, Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board
SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of Raised Bill No. 998, An Act Establishing a Tax
Abatement for Certain Conservation Easements

This testimony is submitted in support of Raised Bill 998, An Act Establishing a Tax Abatement for Certain Conservation Easements. I offer my testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Board of which I am Chair.

The Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board was created in 2009 under the Complete Streets Law (CGS Section 13b-13a). The Board's purpose is to examine the need for bicycle and pedestrian transportation, promote programs and facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, and advise appropriate agencies of the state on policies, programs and facilities for bicycles and pedestrians. It is with this purpose that we offer our testimony.

This bill authorizes municipalities to abate property taxes on a trail corridor protected by a conservation easement; and clarifies that the Public Act 490 Open Space property tax reduction benefit can be used on a state-designated Greenway on private land.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board has been encouraged by the progress made in Connecticut in the last several years in extending the state's network of greenways, bikeways and recreational trails. Some projects, however, have been delayed because state law is not clear about how trails and greenways are to be treated in terms of property tax burden. This important bill will provide a mechanism already in use for conservation parcels and extend it to trails and greenways.

Thank you for considering the input of the Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board on this bill.